

A Study on Opinion of Girl Students of Kashmir Valley towards Participation in Sports

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to know about the participation of girl students in sports and the different constraints preventing them from involvement in the sports. Considerable amount of literature is available about girl students participation in sport leisure but very limited literature is available about the girl students of Kashmir valley involvement in sports. In this context to know the opinion of girl students towards sports a well-designed questionnaire on three point likert scale was utilized for collection of data from 200 respondents selected through stratified random sampling technique. Kashmiri girls do not think of taking sports as a carrier. The general perception of the students is that participation in games enhances the physical and mental abilities of the participants. The results of the study indicated that girl students like sports and wants to participate in sports for overall development but their culture, ethnicity, physical and spiritual challenges, parents, family members, society and political disturbance in Kashmir valley discourage them to participate in sports. This study also confirms that younger generation is not interested in traditional games of Kashmir but interested only in the games covered by electronic media and sports activities. The results obtained in this study are in agreement with the study conducted by [1].

Keywords: Students, Sports participation, Opinion, Traditional games, Kashmir

INTRODUCTION

Kashmiri communities appear to have treated sports as a platform to inculcate a spirit of competition and also as a mode of entertainment and recreation during leisure hours. Kashmiris had strong institutions of traditional games revealed by Walter Lawrence and are of the opinion that apart from competition and recreation sports also help in preparing the individual to face unforeseen predicaments in life as well as in up scaling the level of preparedness against the foreign invaders who would frequently disturb the peace and harmony of this lovely land, "the paradise on earth" of poets and travelers [2]. Most of the sports and games are played amongst the youth between 11and 23 years of age. Some seniors too chip in, at times, whenever competition becomes a bit interesting and intense. More than a dozen sports played by Kashmiri youth which can be bracketed under the traditional category, (though they are played in some modified forms around India and Pakistan as well) have been identified. Most of these sports are out-door in nature and they can be organized in different topographical terrains with minor adjustments in rules and the number of players involved. Studies on traditional sports and games of Kashmir have a significant value in the field of physical education. Some of the traditional games of Kashmir are Tsu:ri-Tshopi (chori-chupay), Lath'Kej-loth "gilli

danda", Garam "hitting the pot sherds", Dab-e-Dab "Wrestling", Raz Gindun "Rope Skipping", Tuley langun "Piggy back", Tike:e-tar "Throwing of pot shereds on surface", Ach:e-da:r or dare:daje " rag dolls", Kath-Shahe:bum "Touch the wood game", Tienka or Tenche, Saza:loung "Hop Scotch", Gulail "Sling and Stone", Archery "Teir Kaman", Tchra:nt, "Water sports". In Kashmir only a fraction of the traditional sports have been identified so far by explorers, travelers, missionaries and researchers. The traditional games of Kashmir and the attitude of people towards sports and games have been discussed recently by [1, 3]. One of the most significant features of these games is that they are played at virtually no cost or a little, if any. Weak economic condition of the subjugated people of Kashmir over the centuries may be a possible reason for non-development of expensive games. Sports play a vital role in physical, mental, emotional, social and psychological development of its participants without any discrimination of gender. A number of studies have shown that exercise may play a therapeutic role in addressing a number of psychological disorders. Research studies also show that exercise has a positive influence on depression. The research studies substantiate a positive relation between sports participation and mental health [4, 5]. Male and female are equal but still women are facing

numerous problems of inequality throughout the world. Although participation of women and girls in all kind of sports and their right to play is a global issue but it is generally conceive that women and girls in Islamic countries are facing countless problems in this regard. Kashmir is a Muslim region and all activities are based on Islam in general. Islam emphasizes strongly on healthy life and according to Holy Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), a strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer. There has been a misconception that sports are prohibited in Islam and Muslim societies do not allow sports participation, particularly to the women folk. The on ground reality is different as sports participation is not only allowed but encouraged as well in Muslim societies for both gender; however in certain circumstances some sports are disallowed specially for women and girls. Some of the games popular among the Muslims included races and running events, horse and camel riding and racing, swimming, archery, fencing, wrestling, weight lifting, high jumping, and stone tossing. Benefits of sports for the maintenance of health and fitness and overall wellbeing of the participants is also agreed by the Muslims and the Holy Quran declares that do not forbid good things which Allah made lawful, and do not transgress that Allah has not transgressed. (Al-Maida: 87). Some people are often mistaken in defining physical education and sports education. In a broader context, physical education is defined as a process of learning through physical activities designed to improve physical fitness, develop motor skills, knowledge and behaviour of healthy and active living, sportsmanship and emotional intelligence. Islam demands and expects a high moral life and a sound character from its believers and similar is the focus of today's sports as according to [6] "positive character traits" can very effectively be learned through ardent participation in sports, recreation and related physical activities. Participation of girls in sports depends upon many factors such as country of origin, religious orientation, gender norms, culture, parents, family, relatives and society member support. These are the factors which shape different attitude and beliefs on physical activities, sports and athletics. Some girls participate in sports without any hurdle, while some face numerous problems, hurdles and challenges for sports participation. Islam not only encourages the sports as source of recreation and enjoyment but also recommends for good health, fitness and healthy life style. The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H) advised Muslims of that time to participate in many forms of sports such as running, horseback riding, swimming and archery, which even today are considered of the

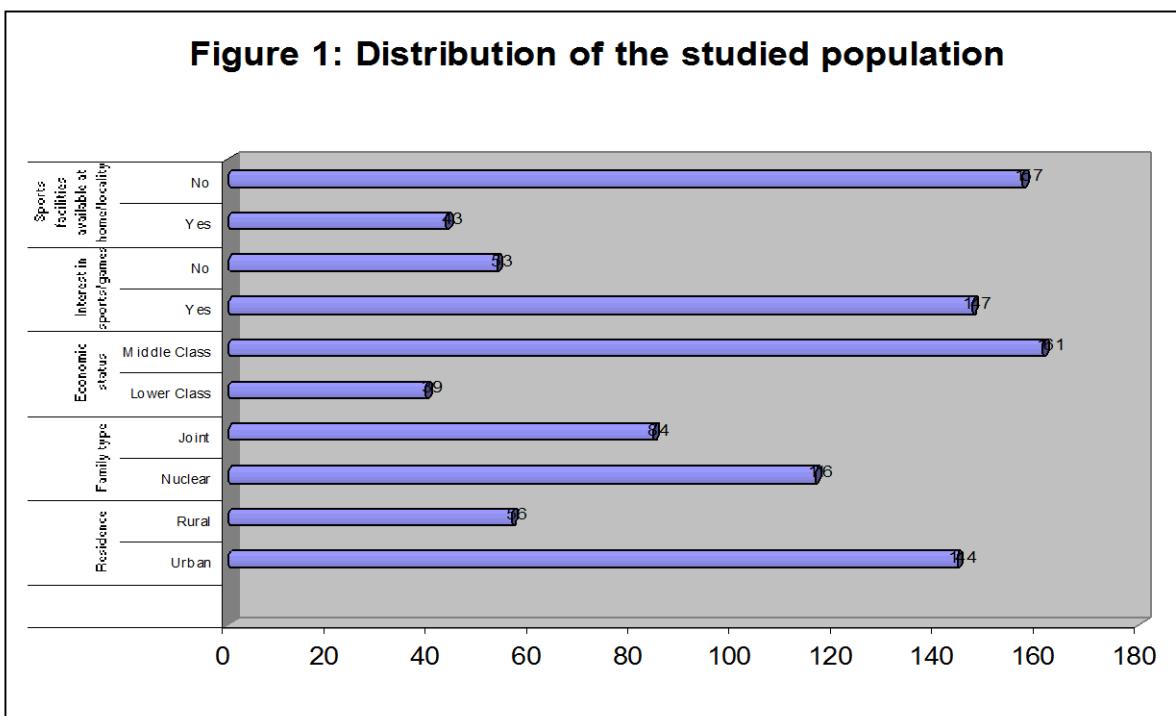
best form of exercise. The holy prophet (P.B.U.H) himself would engage in running, archery, horse-riding, racing, wrestling and swimming [7, 8]. It has been reported in several Ahadeeth, sayings of the Prophet that the Prophet raced with his wives and participated in swimming . The Hazrat Aisha, wife of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H), said that once Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was on a journey with her. Our Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) had a race with her and she (Hazrat Aisha) won the race. After some time when I (Hazrat Aisha) gained some weight our Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H) again raced with her (Hazrat Aisha) and he (Hazrat Muhammad P.B.U.H) won the race. Then he said, 'This cancels that,' referring to the previous occasion." [9, 10] said: "Refresh your minds from time to time, for a tired mind becomes blind." Muslim ingenious Abu Darda commented: "I entertain my heart with something trivial in order to make it stronger in the service of the Truth". A continuing debate about participation of girls in sports and physical activities has occurred since long. Moreover it is said that girls are constrained by their parents, relatives and society members from participating in sports and physical activities. It is also said that cultural and ethnic factors, spiritual and physical challenges constrained girls to participate in sports. How accurate are those statement need further research. In this context the researchers conducted present research study to examine the perspective of girl students of Kashmir valley towards the involvement in sports and physical activities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was conducted in Kashmir valley of J&K State. Since very little literature on the topic in Kashmir valley is available, an attempt was made to gather information directly from personal visits, interviews and observation. However some secondary sources were also made use of, for a comprehensive review of literature pertaining to topic under study. A sample of 200 girl students from Kashmir valley was selected through stratified random sampling technique from different educational institutes of Kashmir valley. Besides collecting basic information from the respondents, a well designed questionnaire with 15 statements on three point Likert scale "ranging from disagree to agree" was prepared. The researchers personally delivered the questionnaire to the respondents and gets back, duly filled by them. The collected data were arranged, organized, and after due coding, it was processed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version-20) using appropriate statistical tools.

(Indoor sports/games of girls in Kashmir during winter and in Curfew/Strike)



Figure 1: Distribution of the studied population


RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in Figure-1 shows the distribution of the respondents as per residence, family type, economic status, sports facilities available at home/locality and the interest of girl students towards sports.

The data presented in Table 1 reveals that 69.5 % girl students like sports while 71 % like to participate in sports. A good portion of sampled population (85.5 %) consider sports a positive activity that develop its participants physically, mentally, socially, emotionally and psychologically while 64.5 % girl students were agreed with the statement that Islam encourages the women to participate in sports for good health and fitness. It was the view point of 48.5 % respondents that Islam allows Muslim women to take part in sports after observing dress code while 83 % said that participation of Muslim women in sports is seen as a challenge to the boundaries of their ethnic identities. It was the opinion of the 90.5 % girl respondents that Muslim culture prohibited the women to participate in sports. It is observed that 88 % said that Cultural and ethnic factors determine their participation in sports. Majority (85.5%) of the respondents said that spiritual and physical challenges constrained Muslim girls to

participate in sports while 79.5 % said that sport is not seen as respectable activity for women in Islamic countries. Girls are constrained by their parents from participating in sports was the view point of 87 % respondents, 77.5 % said that girls are constrained by their family and relative from participating in sports, while 86 % respondents said that girls are constrained by society from participating in sports. Majority of respondents (84.5 %) were agreed with the statement that Islam allows the girls to participate in sports after observing Islamic dress code. It is further observed that 89% respondents believe that Kashmir problem is the biggest hurdle in the development of sports in Kashmir valley. The above mentioned results have shown that girl students attitude towards sports is positive and they not only like sports but they also like to participate in sports for their overall development i.e. physical, mental, social, emotional and psychological development but their ethnic and cultural factors as well as spiritual and physical challenges forbid them to participate in sports. The result of the studies show that sport is not seen as respectable activity for women in Islamic countries and Islam allows Muslim women to take part in sports after observing Islamic dress code. The literature available on gender and sports also confirm that girls are facing numerous constraints as compared

to boys regarding their participation in sports both in Muslim and western countries [11, 12]. Several scholars say that teaching of Islam advocate and favour sports activities for physical development of both genders. While some scholars dislike the ways in which Muslim girls and women take part in sports, so they strongly criticize their participation in sports [13]. Islam promotes good health and fitness for both genders and encourages both genders to participate in sports and physical activity to maintain healthy lifestyles, however in certain circumstances some sports are disallowed specially for women and girls. Muslim women and girls can participate in some forms of sports after

observing some conditions, procedure and dress code but the problem arises when international sports federations disallow the Muslim girls to observe Islamic dress code. Muslim girls and women are well aware of the benefits and importance of sports and their interest in sports is increasing day by day. Therefore their participation in sports and physical activities is increasing gradually in Islamic countries. But it is needed that Muslim girls and women infact all women folk [14, 15] should be facilitated to participate in sports and modest sportswear according to Islamic dress code should be introduced so that Muslim girls and women took part in sports without any hesitation.

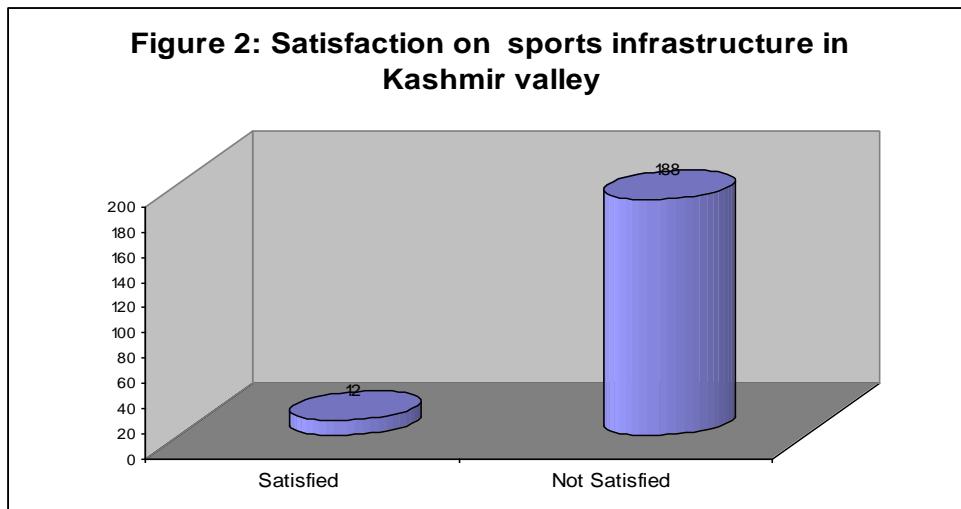
Table 1: Statements and Scores of the respondents under study

S.No.	Statement	Disagree (%)	Not Sure	Agree
1.	Do you like sports?	14 (7%)	7 (3.5%)	139 (69.5%)
2.	Do you like to participate in sports.	55 (27.5%)	3 (1.5%)	142 (71%)
3.	You want to participate in sports for your overall development i.e. physical, mental, social, emotional and psychological development.	23 (11.5%)	6 (3%)	171 (85.5%)
4.	Islam encourages the women to participate in sports for good health and fitness.	59 (24.5%)	12 (6%)	129 (64.5%)
5.	Islam allows Muslim women to take part in sports after observing dress code.	82 (41%)	21 (10.5%)	97 (48.5%)
6.	Participation of girls in sports is seen as a challenge to the boundaries of their ethnic identities.	26 (13%)	8 (4%)	166 (83%)
7.	Culture of a country prohibits the women to participate in sports.	14 (7%)	5 (2.5%)	181 (90.5%)
8.	Cultural and ethnic factors determine your participation in sports.	18 (9%)	6 (3%)	176 (88%)
9.	Spiritual and physical challenges constrain Muslim women to participate in sports.	24 (12%)	5 (2.5%)	171 (85.5%)
10.	Sport is not seen as respectable activity for women in Islamic countries.	32 (16%)	9 (4.5%)	159 (79.5%)
11.	Girls are constrained by their parents from participating in sports.	15 (7.5%)	11 (5.5%)	174 (87%)
12.	Girls are constrained by their family and relative from participating in sports.	32 (16%)	13 (6.5%)	155 (77.5%)
13.	Girls are constrained by society from participating in sports.	21 (10.5%)	7 (3.5%)	172 (86%)
14.	Islam allows the women to participate in sports after observing Islamic dress code.	14 (7%)	17 (8.5%)	169 (84.5%)
15.	Do you feel Kashmir Dispute is the biggest hurdle in the development of sports in Kashmir valley	10 (5.5%)	12 (4.5%)	178 (89%)

Chi-square = 272.139, P-value<0.01

The data presented in Figure 2 shows that majority of the respondents are not satisfied with the sports facilities available in the educational institutions in

Kashmir valley. The results are in agreement with the study of [2].



CONCLUSION

Traditional games and sports once constituted an important aspect of the socio-cultural side of traditional Kashmiri life almost vanished from the scene. Only indoor games are practiced by girls generally in crisis (curfew/hartal) time. We know Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) emphasized a lot on the importance of sports and he used to arrange competitions for various sports like running, horse race, wrestling, shooting and swimming. It is concluded that Kashmiri girl students not only like sports but they want to participate in sports practically for their overall development. Islam encourage the women to participate in sports, after observing Islamic dress code, to promote good health and fitness and to maintain healthy life style but their ethnicity, culture, spiritual and physical challenges constrain them to participate in sports. Moreover sports is not seen as a respectable activity for girls in Kashmir valley by parents, family members, relative and society members discourage girls to participate in sports and physical activities. The valley of Kashmir is at present going through a turmoil thus causing a number of health problems. Regular exercises can play a therapeutic role in addressing a number of psychological disorders. Sports and games have a positive influence on depression so it is suggested that youth of the conflict valley should take part in sports and physical activities regularly. The results obtained in this study are also in agreement with the study recently conducted by Bilal et al [16].

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN SPORTS ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Every education institution should improve standard of sports infrastructure in Kashmir valley.

- ✓ Sufficient literature on games and sports should be made available in every education Institution of Kashmir valley.
- ✓ Parents should encourage girl childrens to take part in sports and act as coaches.
- ✓ Government should encourage youth and give job on priority basis to the sports persons.
- ✓ Electronic media should work more for the development of sports and games in the valley.
- ✓ The political problem of J&K state may be solved peacefully as per the wishes of the people of J&K state, which is the biggest hurdle in the development of education system in general.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors declare that we have no conflicts of interest.

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